

KENNEBEC LAKE ASSOCIATION

Winter Newsletter

January 2008

A Word from the President...

The freezing of the lake and subsequent snowfalls in early December certainly acted as harbingers of what was to come, for indeed we are experiencing an old-fashioned winter, a real wonderland at Kennebec Lake.

The big storm that impacted most of southern Ontario hit Kennebec on December 16 and left full-time residents digging out for as long as three days. The estimated accumulation of 35 to 40 centimetres was the heaviest single snowfall that many can remember. It has left everyone with the lingering challenge of where to put more snow as it comes. The arrival of a "January thaw" promises to offer help!

On another front, I'm pleased to have been appointed to serve on the Quinte Source Protection Committee (see page 4). Although the work will be time-consuming over several years, I am pleased to represent the interests of our lake and watershed residents in the protection of our water assets.

Happy New Year to all. May 2008 be a wonderful year for you and your family.

Terry Kennedy

FISHING FOR INFORMATION

In 2007 your Stewardship Committee worked toward learning more about fish and fish habitat in Kennebec Lake. We all have different experiences and successes when we go fishing, as well as our own beliefs about the quality of fishing in Kennebec Lake and ideas about how to improve it. What we don't have is accurate, verifiable information.

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has done surveys over the years, and although they were not done annually and formats vary, they do provide some data. We still need more information about the habitats of the various kinds of fish in our lake — habitats for spawning, nurseries for young fish and habitats for mature fish — as well as how many fish are harvested from the lake each year.

With few resources and a limited number of people to work on projects, we decided to concentrate first on walleye (pickerel). In spring 2007 KLA requested and received approval and funding (up to \$1,500) from MNR to carry out two information-gathering projects about walleye in Kennebec Lake. The projects require extensive work to be done by people around the lake. Part of the work was done over the past summer. More will be done in spring 2008.

Work last year, on the first project, included doing a "creel census" designed to answer questions about fishing pressure on our lake.

How many people are fishing?

Following an MNR schedule to cover all days of the week, at times ranging from dawn to dusk, more than 10 families of volunteers travelled the lake, counting numbers of boats fishing. In all, 28 counts were completed, and we have sent this information to MNR for analysis.

How much time do we spend fishing? How many walleye do we catch?

Last spring a form was sent to everyone residing, cottaging or visiting a resort on the lake, asking them to record their fishing activities from May to August. Unfortunately, fewer than 10 people returned completed forms. MNR staff also visited Springwood and interviewed anglers about time spent and fishing success.

What is the age of the fish taken?

MNR staff collected sample scales from fish harvested from the lake, to determine the age of fish caught.

The second project focuses on the location and quality of spawning areas—where walleye are spawning and whether the spawning beds are clean enough to allow the eggs to breathe. In the spring of 2006 and 2007 we searched for spawning beds in the lake. MNR staff visited known spawning beds with KLA members last summer, and more work will be done in spring 2008, with emphasis on the spawning area below the bridge on Beaver Creek. We will be asking some of you to help us monitor this area right after the ice leaves the lake in April and the water temperature is about 8 degrees C. When Stewardship Committee members and MNR staff visited the area last summer, we saw beaver dams, fallen trees and other debris blocking the flow of Beaver Creek below the spawning area; we need to know if the adult walleye can still swim far enough upstream to spawn.

by Aileen Merriam

Watch for further reports on these two projects as the work progresses. If you can help, please contact Aileen Merriam at 613 335-3589. (See also *The World of Walleye* on page 5.)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Lake Management Planning Workshop

February 7, 7 p.m. Oso Hall, Sharbot Lake
Speaker Gordon Rodgers (Frontenac Stewardship Council, French Planning Services), break-out groups, exhibits, *including information from Kennebec Lake Association on doing Lake Management, Lake Planning and Lake Stewardship using volunteers.*

The Fabled Fisher

February 12, 7 p.m. Verona Community Hall
Speaker Dr. Jeff Bowman, MNR Research Group, Trent University. Learn more about this interesting member of the weasel family. (Above two events sponsored by Friends of the Salmon River and Frontenac Stewardship Council, contact Gray Merriam 613 335-3589)

West Kennebec Paddle

May 4, 10 a.m. Henderson Road bridge boat launch. A 10 - 15 km flatwater paddle to explore the shores of Kennebec Lake, followed by an optional scramble up a granite ridge. (With Catarqui Canoe Club, contact Dugald Carmichael 613 542-8628)

Developing a KLA Strategy for Lake Management

by John DuChene

As property owners on Kennebec Lake, we all want to protect the lake. To attain that goal, the Kennebec Lake Association, through its Executive Committee, will proceed to develop a KLA management strategy.

We will confirm the values of the lake articulated by KLA members, such as good fishing, peace and quiet, etc., by using a visioning workshop, newsletter insert and survey/questionnaire. These lake/watershed values will be presented formally at the 2008 AGM and then reaffirmed every year, adjusting actions as required.

State-of-the-lake summary reports will be prepared based on information and evaluation that have been ongoing over the past several years for the purpose of identifying key issues that warrant attention; for instance, water quality, fisheries and shoreline protection. Progress reports will be inserted in the newsletter, and a summary report of issues will be brought forward at the 2009 AGM and also revisited yearly.

Based on these values and issues, we will recommend actions for the KLA in a management strategy document that should be available for adoption at the 2010 AGM. Efforts to understand the natural processes associated with our watershed and to educate our community will continue to be a positive influence in protecting our lake's environment.

The Legal Framework for Lake Management Planning

by Laura Bisset

An Official Plan (OP) is a legal document that sets out a municipality's vision for land use within its borders, addressing issues such as growth management, environmental protection, municipal infrastructure, heritage conservation and the location of various land uses through its policies. The first OP of the Township of Central Frontenac was approved in November 2001. Pursuant to the Planning Act, a five-year review of the plan, which canvassed the public for input, was commenced in 2006 and adopted in 2007 by the Township and currently awaits approval by the Province.

An issue that emerged as fundamental is lake management planning. The Township website (www.centralfrontenac.com) notes: "With the increasing demand for waterfront residential development, questions arise as to how much development is feasible without compromising the water quality of our lakes and rivers. ... Should lake management plans be prepared for all lakes? Who should prepare these plans? Should higher standards be imposed in conserving shorelines in their natural state?" Answers will unfold through local initiative and continued cooperation with the Township.

In addition to public comment, the Provincial Policy Statement identifies important policy direction for municipalities. For instance, policy 2.2.1 requires the Township to "protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water by (a) using the watershed as the ecologically meaningful scale for planning... and (d) implementing necessary restrictions on development and site alteration to protect vulnerable surface and ground water." (<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page215.aspx>)

The Township's planning consultant, Tunnock Consulting Ltd., has made recommendations to address the issue. For instance, (1) the preparation of Lake Management Plans for all lakes in the Township experiencing significant development pressures; (2) the establishment of a management structure within the Township to oversee the preparation of Lake Management Plans; and (3) strengthening policy to reinforce the need to upgrade and replace sewage disposal systems.

The planning process is fundamentally a public process. If lake management planning is of interest to the residents of Kennebec Lake, they need to take advantage of opportunities and directions established in the Official Plan.

Laura Bisset is an associate of the Municipal and Environmental Law group of Davis & Company LLP, which advises public and private sector clients on a broad range of environmental, municipal, land use and regulatory issues. This article is intended to provide general information on legal issues of interest to the cottagers of Kennebec Lake. It is not intended to be a comprehensive review; nor is it intended to provide legal advice. Readers should not act on information in this article without seeking specific advice on the particular matter from a lawyer.

Departures and Arrivals

Much gratitude goes to the following retiring members of the KLA executive for their many years of service: Bruce Counce (treasurer), Carol Counce (secretary), and Jack Nicolson (former member at large).

We also welcome new members to the executive: Mike Wise (treasurer), Gloria Smiley (secretary), and Peter Smiley (member at large).

Welcome to Charlotte DuChene to the newsletter production team.

The Great Escape and Good Advice

With the cold weather comes the regular use of heaters, fireplaces and wood stoves, which increases our chances of a house fire. Early in December, long-time Kennebec Lake resident Shirley Coutts saw her home burn to the ground moments after she and friend Charles Hoffman barely escaped out a window and down a rope ladder.

Shirley, now residing in Stittsville, strongly encourages all of us to practise our escape routes. She especially advises everyone to make a detailed inventory of household contents and to keep it up to date, to make sure smoke alarms are working and to protect our valuables in a fireproof container.

Shirley expressed her gratitude to all the Kennebecers who have helped her and Charles get back on their feet, and special thanks go as well to all the members of the Central Frontenac Fire Department for all their help.

What is the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve?

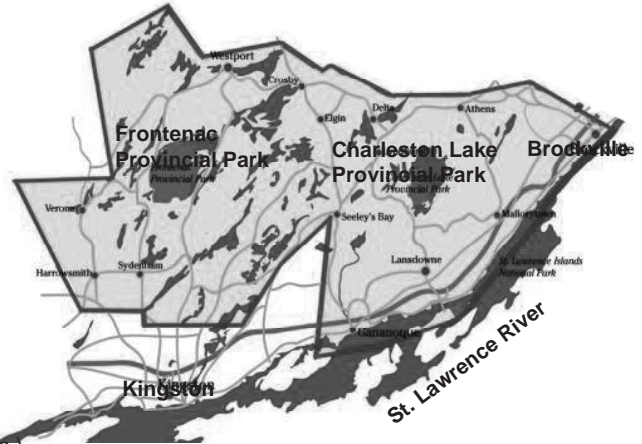
by Gray Merriam

In the fall of 2002 a charter issued by the United Nations arrived by canoe to the headquarters of the fledgling Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (FABR), named for the arch of granitic rock that extends from the Canadian Shield southeast of Kingston across the St. Lawrence and into the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York.

A UNESCO representative came in early December to help celebrate the FABR's fifth anniversary.

UN Biosphere Reserves recognize areas that are exceptionally valuable globally. No restrictions are placed on land use; establishment of the FABR is simply an announcement to the world that we have a very special area of the Earth's surface in our neighbourhood. The reserve is within easy driving distance from Kennebec Lake—a nice winter outing.

Biosphere Reserves encourage conservation and research, communication among stewardship organizations and appropriate development that will enable people to continue to live and work within the reserve. The FABR recently grew by the addition of all of South Frontenac Township. FABR now includes the area bounded by Brockville, Gananoque, Westport and Verona. More at www.fabr.ca. Information from an article by Wilma Kenny in *The Frontenac News*.



Winter Activities Outdoors

This is a true Canadian winter with lots of snow and cool temperatures. Enjoy the outdoor activities in the area:

1. **Snowshoeing** and **cross-country skiing** are great anywhere around Kennebec Lake. Also check out Frontenac, Silver Lake, Bon Echo and Sharbot Lake Provincial Parks (go to www.ontarioparks.com and scroll down to the park of your choice). Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Authority also offers many family programs, with groomed trails (and lessons), a natural skating rink and warming huts; skis, skates and snowshoes are available for rent (www.cataraqueiregion.on.ca 613-546-4228).
2. **Ice-fishing**
3. **Downhill skiing** at Calabogie Peaks Resort (www.calabogie.com 613-752-2720).
4. **Snowmobiling** on the Cross-Canada Trail in Arden.
5. **Skating** at the Mountain Grove rink. Check to see if the rink is open in Arden.
6. **Curling** in Tweed.

The Sharbot Lake Heritage Days from February 18 to 24 will offer lots of outdoor and indoor fun.

Look for discount coupons in *Cottage Life* magazine for the Spring Cottage Life Show in Toronto, March 28 to 30.

by Judy Kennedy

New Kennebec Area Historical Society

Cindy Kelsey, our Arden postmistress, has agreed to chair the initial stages of a local historical society. You can help. Please look for pictures and articles, and/or write down stories of past decades of events in our area. Any material is welcome. Meetings will resume in the spring of 2008 and will be announced in public places and in the next KLA Newsletter.

CRANBERRY PECAN TART

by Judy Kennedy

Sweet and rich like pecan pie, this dessert is all the more tempting with the unexpected tang of cranberries! Serves 8.

Line a 25 or 28 cm (10 or 11 in.) fluted tart pan with your favourite pie crust. Preheat oven to 200 degrees C (400 degrees F). Line the shell with foil wrap and pie weights. Bake shell in the middle of the oven for 10 minutes. Remove weights and foil, and continue to bake shell until it begins to brown on the bottom, 8 to 10 minutes longer. Remove shell from oven; cool on a rack.

Filling:

3 large **eggs**

160 mL **brown sugar** (2/3 cup)

160 mL **corn syrup** (2/3 cup)

60 mL **butter**, melted and cooled (1/4 cup)

5 mL **vanilla** (1 tsp.)

2.5 mL **salt** (1/2 tsp.)

240 mL **cranberries**, roughly chopped (1 cup)

240 mL whole **pecans**, lightly toasted (1 cup)

Using an electric mixer, combine eggs, brown sugar, corn syrup, butter, salt and vanilla until smooth. Using a wooden spoon, stir in cranberries and pecans. Pour the filling into the prepared pie shell and bake in the middle of the oven for 55 to 65 minutes.

Hint: *If the rim of the tart browns too quickly, cover it, leaving the centre exposed. (Use aluminum foil or an upside down aluminum pie plate with the centre cut out.)*

Adapted from a recipe by Darlene King in the October 2000 *Harrowsmith Country Life*.

Gourmet "Suet" for the Birds

by Bill Van Vugt

Cook 2 cups of **oatmeal** in 4 cups of boiling water for 2 minutes. **Add** 1 pound of **lard** and 1 1/2 cups of **peanut butter**. **Mix** together thoroughly.

Remove from heat and add 3 1/2 cups each of **oatmeal**, **cornmeal** and **cream of wheat**.

Knead thoroughly and form into balls, blocks, etc.

Suggestion: *Fill a pint or quart plastic berry basket with the "suet", and string up from the four corners to make an instant feeder.*

Makes about 16 cups of "suet".

Don't Move Wood!!

The **Asian long-horned beetle** (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) and the **emerald ash borer** (*Agilus planipennis*) are two non-native, invasive insects that pose a serious threat to forests of Ontario.

The Asian long-horned beetle attacks and kills a wide range of hardwood trees, but not conifers. Discovery of this wood-boring insect in the Toronto and Vaughan area led to extensive eradication programs involving cutting, burning and chipping. Any new sightings require immediate action.



Shiny black with random white spots, 2-3.5 cm, very long antennae



Metallic green, 0.8 - 1.4 cm

Emerald ash borers, found in areas of southwestern Ontario, have killed millions of ash trees in the United States and Canada.

What can we do to prevent infestation of these insects? First of all, don't bring firewood of any tree species in from other areas. This is a leading cause of their spread. Firewood should be obtained and burned locally.

Learn to recognize the insects and symptoms of infested trees, and report sightings to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at 1-800-442-2342 or the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources at 1-800-667-1940. To learn more, visit www.inspection.gc.ca or www.invadingspecies.com.

NO IDLE THREAT by Seth and Charlotte DuChene

Vehicles are the single biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. Every motorist can take one small step to reduce the impact our cars are having on the environment, and that's to reduce the amount of time we leave our cars idling.

Studies by Environment Canada suggest that the average Canadian lets a vehicle idle for 10 to 15 minutes a day. Not surprisingly, we do most of our idling during winter. If every driver of a light-duty vehicle in Canada refrained from idling for just five minutes a day, collectively, over the year, *more than 680 million litres of fuel would be saved and more than 1.6 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions would be prevented from entering the atmosphere.*

After 10 seconds of idling, your car has used about the same amount of fuel needed to shut it off and turn it on again—so you're wasting gas. You're also going to save money on future car repairs, because idling isn't good for your engine.

Even in the coldest conditions, cars today only need a maximum of 30 seconds of idling before they're ready to roll; and they will warm up faster once moving. Another strategy: Use a block heater to keep the motor ready for startup in cold weather; it actually makes your engine more fuel-efficient.

The City of Kingston now has an anti-idling law that makes it illegal to leave a vehicle sitting and running for more than three minutes in a one-hour period.



Let's not wait for a by-law to force us to act. *The decisions and the keys are in our hands.*

Source Water Protection Efforts

The Ontario Government, as part of its response to the Walkerton contaminated water tragedy, has been moving on aspects of The Clean Water Act, 2006. This Act is intended to ensure drinking water supplies across the province will continue to be safe and plentiful for generations to come. A key component is the establishment of a series of "source protection areas" on a watershed basis, using existing conservation authority boundaries. Kennebec Lake, as part of the Salmon River watershed, is located in the area under the jurisdiction of the Quinte Conservation Authority.

Each conservation authority has been required to establish a Source Water Protection Committee, which will be expected to lead in the development of a source protection plan for that area. The Quinte Source Protection Committee's 15 members represent residents (urban and rural), industry, agriculture, municipalities, First Nations and the environment. It appears that this committee and its work have the potential to be a significant force in the future well-being of our Kennebec water resources.

by Terry Kennedy

Remembering a Special Kennebec Cottager

On August 11, 1958, Arlo (Andy) Anderson of Maryland, USA, purchased 100 acres at the northeast end of Kennebec Lake. On August 11, 2007, Andy passed away. He was 82.

Andy was a bombardier/navigator with the U.S. Air Force in the Second World War. After the war, with an M.A. in mathematics, he began work at the Naval Research Lab in D.C. Andy was one of the mathematicians who developed the first hydrogen bomb and later the electromagnetic pulse-related to air burst nuclear explosions. He was truly a pioneer in his field, responsible for world-changing technology. Two special hobbies he enjoyed were opera and reading British history. Andy retired in 1973 and spent half of every year at Kennebec Lake.

We have lost a wonderful friend, neighbour and scholar. Andy is survived by his wife Betty and son Clifford.

THE WORLD OF WALLEYE

Stizostedion vitreum

The walleye (a.k.a. pickerel to many residents of Ontario, and nicknamed "marble eyes") gets its name from its light-reflecting retina. This unique feature causes sensitivity to sunlight. Therefore they seek cover or remain deep in clear lakes. This member of the perch family is popular with anglers on Kennebec Lake.

Spawning occurs in the spring shortly after the ice breaks up, at water temperatures of about 7 to 9 degrees Celsius. Walleye prefer to spawn in creeks or tributaries where there is flowing water and adequate rubble. If they are unable to access these locations, they will spawn along wind-swept, rubble-strewn shores of lakes at depths of less than 2 metres.

Spawning occurs at night in groups, with one large female and one or two smaller males or two females and numerous males. Unlike bass, the male walleye is not territorial, and does not build a nest. Prior to spawning, there is much ritual posturing, after which the female rolls over and releases her eggs that are simultaneously fertilized by the males. The eggs fall into crevices in the rubble. They stick to stones and debris and are thus protected without the need of guarding. The eggs hatch in 12 to 18 days, and by 10 to 15 days after hatching, the young fry have dispersed into the upper levels of open water. In the latter part of the summer, the young move toward the bottom.

Young walleye begin by eating invertebrates, crustaceans and very small fish. As they mature, their diet consists predominantly of fish. Their favourites are perch and members of minnow families. They can be cannibalistic when other forage fish are not readily available. They will resort to eating crayfish, snails, frogs and mudpuppies but only when forced by necessity. Again, to protect their eyes, walleye forage during low light conditions or nocturnally. In tea-coloured lakes such as Kennebec, feeding is often spread throughout the day.

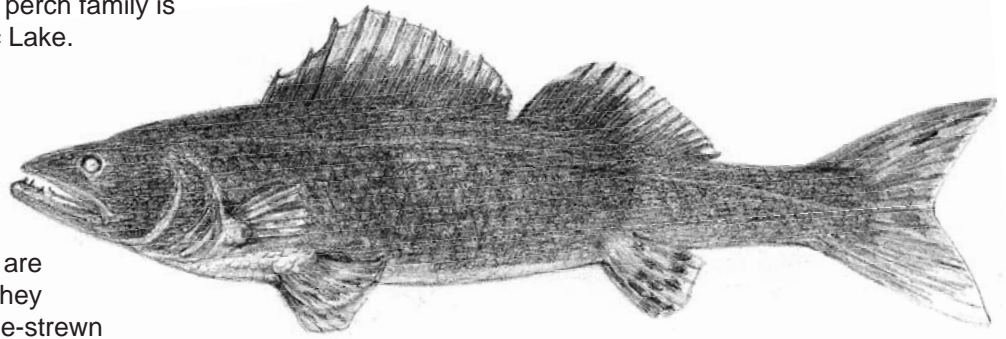
Male walleye mature in 2 to 4 years and females in 3 to 6 years; they can live for 10 to 12 years. The average size for walleye is 1 to 3 pounds, but they can grow to 12 to 15 pounds in southern Ontario.

During the winter, walleye do not change their habitat except to avoid strong currents. Mostly they travel in loose schools, with summer territories. There is evidence that they return to the same spawning grounds each year.

Northern pike is the predominant predator. Adult perch, other walleye, fish-eating birds and mammals also prey on younger walleye. Perch and smallmouth bass are their main competitors for food. Conditions at spawning time, such as stream flow, wind, and water temperature, are the main factors that decide whether there will be a healthy walleye population.

NOTE: Due to the vulnerability of walleye, new regulations for 2008 change both catch limits and size restrictions. Anglers should pick up the new regulations from the Ministry of Natural Resources.

by Greg Morris



J.K. FEASEL 12/07

PLEASE FEED THE BIRDS!

A serious failure of cone and berry crops in the boreal forests well to the north of us may be one reason many of the birds that usually venture south early in the new year arrived in November. The heavy snowfall on December 16 not only made life challenging for us but put several smaller species at risk.

Enjoying the black oil sunflower seeds at our feeders are large flocks of evening grosbeaks, which have joined the blue jays, chickadees, and both red-breasted and white-breasted nuthatches. At the niger feeder the goldfinches are already sharing perches with common redpolls and pine siskins. Along with hairy and downy woodpeckers, all of the above birds enjoy a feed of suet.

Other sightings reported in southern Ontario are the northern shrike, snow buntings and the less common hoary redpoll.

by Bill Van Vugt

Septic Smarts.

PLEASE DO NOT FLUSH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- cigarette butts
- food or household waste
- cooking oil or grease
- antibacterial cleaners or products with chlorine
- feminine hygiene products or diapers

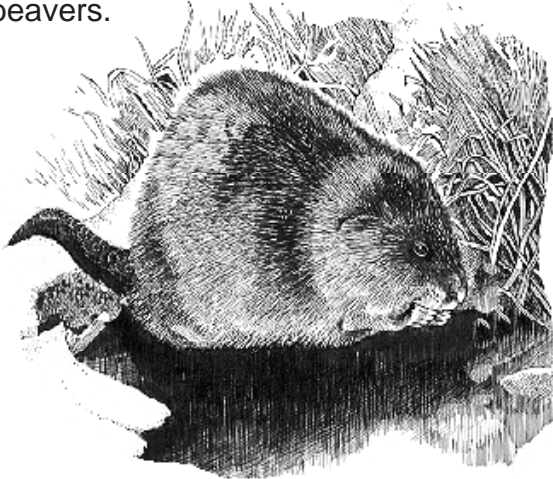
NATURE NOTES

The Muskrat in Winter *Ondatra zibethicus*

by Bea Heissler

The lowly muskrat is a common inhabitant of Ontario wetlands.

Rootstalks, underground stems and shoots of cattails, water lilies and arrowheads are favourite foods of this aquatic rodent. Where these plants abound, in and around Kennebec Lake and the Salmon River, you can expect to see evidence of muskrats, often next door to their larger cousins, the beavers.



Muskrats will frequently den in banks along water systems. As well, they create houses built of aquatic vegetation and mud piled up to a metre high. Once a mound is complete, they excavate an entrance from underwater into the interior, where they continue to hollow out their living quarters.

After freeze-up, muskrats chew holes through the ice in several places, to create "push-ups". Plant materials are pushed through the hole to make a roof over it, creating a small shelter. The space in push-ups is small --often just enough for one muskrat. They are used as a resting places during underwater trips and as a feeding station.

Muskrat houses and push-ups covered in snow are prominent features in the winter landscape of a wetland.

Several muskrats will often shack up together over the winter months, leaving their above-water dens to dine on nutrient-rich tubers, underground stems and shoots of nearby plants, as well as occasional crustaceans and fish. While travelling under the ice, getting air is an issue. Bubbles under the ice and rest stops in push-ups allow breathing.

During the winter muskrats are not very active. Evidence of their presence may only include tracks close to open water, scat and bits of vegetation on the surface of the ice.

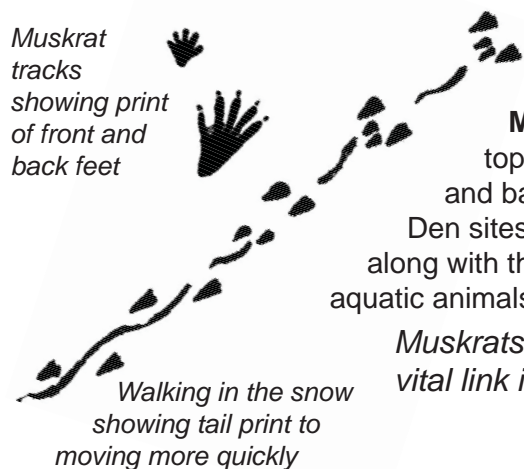


WINTER "PUSH-UP"

Under the ice and in their shelters, they are safe from predators and the cold and spend most of their time sleeping and feeding until breeding activities begin after spring breakup.

Many animals depend on the work and activity of muskrats. The tops of their houses become important nesting sites for various waterfowl, and basking places for water snakes and turtles during the warmer seasons. Den sites are often taken over by mink that prey on the rodents. Their channels, along with those of beavers, are water pathways for small fish and other small aquatic animals during times of drought.

Muskrats play an important role in healthy aquatic communities, both as a vital link in various food chains and in providing habitat for other species.



Muskrat tracks showing print of front and back feet

Walking in the snow showing tail print to moving more quickly

Winter Skies

For those of us who live in rural areas, here's a suggestion: To view spectacular winter skies on a clear night keep your outdoor lights to a minimum. Use either low-voltage or solar lights to allow the beautiful stars to shine through.

Did You Know?

Muskrats are rodents but not rats. They are most closely related to the meadow vole.

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